**Writing Assignment: Harper Lee’s Mockingbird**

**Introduction:**

Congratulations 8th graders! You’ve finished reading *To Kill A Mockingbird* in its entirety, but we can’t stop there. It is important to reflect back on what you’ve learned and to analyze the important messages hidden within the text. Remember that Harper Lee wrote her novel to challenge us b inviting us to think critically about the story and the world we live in.

**Rationale:**

Students, this assignment will require you to demonstrate your ability to compose a well-developed and organized written work with a sound thesis. You will determine a central idea from the text and research its development over the course of the reading, including its relationship to supporting ideas. By doing so, you will prove that you are capable of analyzing relevant themes by attaching significant historical background from the novel with your own personal interpretations.

**Assignment:**

You will be writing a five paragraph-essay on the title of Harper Lee’s novel and the overall theme associated with it. Think critically about the title: what does it mean to kill a mockingbird? Remember that Atticus had this discussion with Scout in the novel, but it is not completely revealed how the mockingbird is related to the theme. You will be required to:

* **Analyze the title**. What does it mean to kill a mockingbird? Think about the figurative language and symbolism used. This will be included in your introduction, leading to the body of your essay.
* **Find evidence from the text to support your answer.** Now that you’ve developed a thesis around the title, find at least three different quotes/scenarios where you are able to support your point. Refer back to important events, plot development, and character development to further guide your understanding of the text.

1. Include at least one quotation in each of the 3 body paragraphs to support your claims.
2. Make sure that you are properly citing those quotes. Use quotation marks, parenthesis, and page numbers (just like in Cornell Notes).

**Workshop I: Brainstorming and Outlining (December 1st)**

* Start your brainstorming process by referring back to your first journal entry where you wrote about your favorite animal and how it represents you. Read over it to get some ideas on how to approach the essay.
* Use the provided outline in class to fill in ideas to create your thesis.
* *With time remaining, start finding evidence from the text to support your ideas.*

**Workshop II: Outlining and Rough Draft (December 2nd)**

* Use the beginning of class to finish your main ideas on the outline.
* Complete your outline by providing evidence from the text to support your claim. These citations are crucial toward proving your point. **Don’t forget to cite your evidence!**
* Use the rest of the time in class to begin writing your rough draft.

**Workshop III: Rough Draft (December 3rd)**

* Finish your rough draft. Remember that you need to have an introduction with a thesis, 3 body paragraphs with supporting evidence, and a conclusion to wrap up your work.
* Rough drafts need to be completed by the end of class. If you feel that you need extra time, it is your responsibility to obtain a pass to come in during recess for extended work time.
* *With time remaining, use the laminated orange editing sheets to check for grammatical errors and conventions.*

**Workshop IV: Editing and Final Drafts (December 4th)**

* Class will start in the computer lab. The class trays with your rough drafts will be brought to the lab, so do not go to our classroom.
* Spend time editing your essay, using the laminated orange editing sheets to double check your work.
* After you’ve edited your work, use a computer to type your final draft. Remember that it must be written in 12 point font, Times New Roman, and double spaced. Points will be taken off if you do not take the time to check for these measures.
* *With time remaining, look over your final draft one more time for editing mistakes before printing and turning it in.*

**Workshop V: Final Drafts (December 5th)**

* We will meet in the computer lab again. We will be using this work day to finish typing your final drafts.
* Don’t forget to do some last minute editing before printing and turning in your essay.
* *With time remaining, read your novel for the upcoming book reports.*

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Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| Ideas and Content | Essay focuses on a clear, well-supported thesis. At least three supporting quotes from the text are evident. | Essay has a fairly clear thesis, but can still improve. At least two supporting quotes from the text are evident. | Essay’s thesis and direction are unclear. Only one or no supporting quotes from the text are evident. |
| Sentence Fluency | Sentences are fluent and cohesive, with little repetition of words/phrases. | Sentences are comprehendible, but can still use revision. | Sentences show little to no effort in fluency. |
| Organization | Ideas, transitions, and paragraphs are formatted thoughtfully. | Ideas, transitions, and paragraphs are appropriate, yet could be smoother. | Ideas and overall structure are unorganized. |
| Conventions | Grammar and conventions are properly used, with little to no distractions. | Grammar and conventions are present, but mistakes were found. | Grammar and conventions are in need of attention. |

Final Student Grade: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: